

10/506769

PCT/SE 03/00088

25-03-2003

need FOR PCT 19 JUL 2004

REC'D 28 APR 2003

WIPO

PCT

PA 955211

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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APPLICATION NUMBER: 60/384,118

FILING DATE: May 31, 2002

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A/PROV

PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT COVER SHEET

This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT under 37 CFR 1.53(c)

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☐ Additional inventors are being named on the _____ separately numbered sheets attached hereto

TITLE OF THE INVENTION (500 characters max)

ANALYSIS SYSTEM

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Direct all Correspondence to:



Customer Number

000466

Bar Code Label:



Type Customer No. Here

00466

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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)



Specification

Number of Pages:

48



CD(s), Number



Drawings

Number of Sheets:

15



Other (specify)



Application Data Sheet

47 Claims and Abstract

METHOD OF PAYMENT OF FILING FEES FOR PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT



Applicant(s) claims small entity status.



A check is enclosed in the amount of **\$160.00** for the filing fee.



The Commissioner is authorized to charge filing fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120

The invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under a contract with an agency of the United States Government.



No



Yes, the name of the U.S. Government agency and the Government contract number are:

Respectfully submitted,

Docket No.: **1501-1050**

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Date: **May 31, 2002**

BC/ia

PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FILING ONLY

Application Data Sheet

Application Information

Application Type:: Provisional
Subject Matter:: Utility
Suggested Classification::
Suggested Group Art Unit::
CD-ROM or CD-R?:: None
Number of CD disks::
Number of Copies of CDs::
Sequence Submission?:: None
Computer Readable Form (CRF):: No
Number of copies of CRF:: 0
Title:: ANALYSIS SYSTEM
Attorney Docket Number:: 1501-1050
Request for Early No
Publication?::
Request for Non-Publication?:: No
Suggested Drawing Figure::
Total Drawing Sheets:: 15
Small Entity?:: No
Latin Name::
Variety Denomination Name::
Petition Included?:: No
Petition Type::
Licensed US Gov't Agency::
Contract or Grant Numbers::
Secrecy Order in Parent No
Appl.?::

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Correspondence Information

Correspondence Customer 000466

Number::

Representative Information

Representative Customer	000466
Number::	

Domestic Priority Information

Application::	Continuity Type::	Parent Application::	Parent Filing Date::

Foreign Priority Information

Country::	Application Number::	Filing Date::	Priority Claimed::

Assignment Information

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State or Province of Mailing Address::

Country of Mailing Address::

Postal or Zip Code of Mailing Address::

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AN ANALYSIS SYSTEM

Technical Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, and to a system for analysing the condition of a machine. The invention also relates to method of operating such a system.

Description of Related Art

Machines with moving parts are subject to wear with the passage of time, which often causes the condition of the machine to deteriorate. Examples of such machines with movable parts are motors, pumps, generators, compressors, lathes and CNC-machines. The movable parts may comprise a shaft and bearings.

In order to prevent machine failure, such machines should be subject to maintenance, depending on the condition of the machine. Therefore the operating condition of such a machine is preferably evaluated from time to time. The operating condition can be determined by measuring vibrations emanating from a bearing or by measuring temperature on the casing of the machine, which temperatures are dependent on the operating condition of the bearing. Such condition checks of machines with rotating or other moving parts are of great significance for safety and also for the length of the life of such machines. It is known to manually perform such measurements on machines. This ordinarily is done by an operator with the help of a measuring instrument performing measurements at measuring points on one or several machines.

A number of commercial instruments are available, which rely on the fact that defects in rolling-element bearings generate short pulses, usually called shock pulses. State of the art shock pulse measuring apparatuses may include proprietary technology for generating a value indicative of the condition of a bearing or a machine.

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Summary

An aspect of the invention relates to the problem of providing equipment for analysing the condition of a machine satisfying the conflicting requirements of reducing the price for a piece of condition monitoring equipment while maintaining profitability for the supplier of the analysis system.

This problem is addressed by an apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, comprising:

An apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, comprising:

- at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;
- data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing a plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn); and
- a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).

This advantageously enables charging a cost for use of the apparatus.

An embodiment of the apparatus comprising:

- a communication port (16); wherein
- said apparatus is adapted to be capable of delivering data indicative of said registered use on said communication port (16).

This advantageously enables delivery of use info to a supplier, for charging a cost. i.e. reporting the amount of use to the supplier.

An embodiment of the apparatus further comprises:

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means for comparing said registered use with a first reference value,
means for disabling said data processing means or at least one of said
condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to the outcome of said
comparison.

This solution encourages a user to buy additional usage so as to maintain operability
of desired functions of the analysis apparatus. Such additional usage may be in the
form of a number of measurements using a desired function, or a period of time the
duration of which is defined by the registered use and the first reference value.

An embodiment of the apparatus further comprises: key reception means adapted to
allow further use of said data processing means in response to reception of a first
key.

This advantageously enables a supplier to amend the relation between a registered
use value and the reference value. Thereby it is possible to increase "the stored
amount of use" available before the data processing means is disabled.

An embodiment of the apparatus further comprises:
key reception means adapted to allow further use of a selected one of said condition
monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to reception of a key associated with
said selected function.

This advantageously enables a supplier to amend the relation between the reference
value and a registered use value for a selected function. Thereby it is possible to
increase "the stored amount of use" available before the selected function is
disabled.

An embodiment of the apparatus further comprises:

- means for reading a current value of said registered use;
- means for comparing said current value with a second reference value;
- means for registering use at a first rate when said current value is above
the second reference value; and

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means for registering use at a second rate when said current value is below the second reference value.

This advantageously enables a supplier to sell usage at different costs. When, according to one embodiment, a user has paid for a certain amount A_p of usage, the second reference value is a level indicating that the whole amount A_p of usage has been spent. This means that any further use will be usage which has not yet been paid for. By the feature of registering such further use at a second rate it is possible to charge a higher cost per unit of usage for such further use.

An embodiment of the apparatus wherein:

at least some of said plurality of condition monitoring functions ($F1, F2, F_n$) is at least partly embodied by computer program code.

An aspect of the invention relates to the problem of achieving a cost-effective improvement of the length of life of machines with a moving part.

An aspect of the invention relates to the problem of achieving an analysis apparatus for evaluating the condition of a machine,

This problem is addressed by

An apparatus for monitoring the condition of a machine, comprising:

at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;

data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing at least two condition monitoring functions ($F1, F2, F_n$);

at least one of said plurality of condition monitoring functions ($F1, F2, F_n$) having a locked state and an unlocked state; said locked state prohibiting complete execution of said condition monitoring function; and said unlocked state allowing execution;

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means for changing the state of a selected condition monitoring function (F1, F2,Fn) between the locked state and the unlocked state.

This advantageously provides the analysis apparatus with an improved versatility. A manufacturer can manufacture the apparatus in a single fashion, and a supplier can sell the apparatus in several versions. More precisely, an apparatus having two individually lockable/unlockable functions can be provided in the following versions:

- with only the first function unlocked;
- with only the second function unlocked;
- with the first function and the second function unlocked.

Hence, a supplier can offer the apparatus in three versions, and this allows for selling it at different price levels dependent on the functionality included. Each client is therefore provided with a choice as to which functions to choose.

An embodiment of the apparatus further comprises:

- key reception means adapted to allow use of a selected one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to reception of a key associated with said selected function;
- a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).
- means for comparing said registered use with a first reference value,
- means for disabling said data processing means or at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to the outcome of said comparison.

Hence, A manufacturer can manufacture the apparatus in a single fashion, and a supplier can sell the apparatus in more than four versions:

- with only the first function unlocked;

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with only the second function unlocked;
with the first function and the second function unlocked.
with both functions locked but each function individually or collectively
unlockable for a limited amount of use.

Brief Description of the Drawings

For simple understanding of the present invention, it will be described by means of examples and with reference to the accompanying drawings, of which:

Fig. 1 shows a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a condition analyzing system according to an embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a part of the condition analyzing system 2 shown in Fig 1.

Figure 3 is a simplified illustration of an embodiment of a memory and its contents.

Figure 4 is a simplified illustration of a second embodiment of the memory and its contents.

Figure 5 is a flow chart illustrating an embodiment of a procedure according to the invention.

Figure 6 is a flow chart illustrating an embodiment of a procedure according to the invention.

Figure 7 is a physical embodiment of an apparatus.

Figure 8 is a side view of the apparatus shown in Figure 7.

Figure 9 illustrates the apparatus, shown in Figure 7, being gripped by a hand 140 of a user.

Figure 10 is a top view of an embodiment of the apparatus, illustrating the physical dimensions thereof.

Figure 11 is a side view of the apparatus shown in Figure 10.

Figure 12 is a block diagram of an embodiment of the apparatus shown in Figure 1 and/or Figures 7 and 8.

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Figure 13A illustrates a part of memory 60 comprising a function F_k and an associated status field 142.

Figure 13B illustrates a part of memory 60 according to an embodiment, comprising a function F_k and an associated status field 142_k.

Figure 14 is a flow chart illustrating an embodiment of a procedure for delivering an apparatus, and for adding use or functionality to the apparatus by means of a key from the supplier.

Detailed Description of Embodiments

In the following description similar features in different embodiments may be indicated by the same reference numerals.

Fig. 1 shows a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a condition analyzing system 2 according to an embodiment of the invention. Reference numeral 4 relates to a client location with a machine 6 having a movable part 8. The movable part may comprise bearings 7 and a shaft 8 which, when the machine is in operation, rotates. The location 4, may for example be the premises of a paper mill plant, or some other manufacturing plant having machines with movable parts.

An embodiment of the condition analyzing system 2 is operative when a sensor 10 is firmly attached on or at a measuring point 12 on the body of the machine 6.

Although Figure 1 only illustrates two measuring points 12, it to be understood that a location 4 may comprise any number of measuring points 12. The condition analysis system 2 shown in Figure 1, comprises an analysis apparatus 14 for analysing the condition of a machine on the basis of measurement values delivered by the sensor 10.

The analysis apparatus 14 has a communication port 16 for bi-directional data exchange. The communication port 16 is connectable to a communications network

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18, e.g. via a data interface 19. The communications network 18 may be the world wide internet, also known as the Internet. The communications network 18 may also comprise a public switched telephone network.

A server computer 20 is connected to the communications network 18. The server 20 may comprise a database 22, user input/output interfaces 24 and data processing hardware 26. The server computer 20 is located on a location 28, which is geographically separate from the client location 4. The server location 28 may be in a first city, such as the Swedish capital Stockholm, and the client location may be in another city, such as Stuttgart, Germany or Detroit in Michigan, USA. Alternatively, the server location 28 may be in a first part of a town and the client location may be in another part of the same town.

According to one embodiment of the system 2 the apparatus 14 is a portable apparatus which may be connected to the communications network 18 from time to time.

According to another embodiment of the system 2 the apparatus 14 is connected to the communications network 18 substantially continuously. Hence, the system 2 according to this embodiment may substantially always be "on line" available for communication with the supplier computer 20.

Fig. 2 is a schematic block diagram of an embodiment of a part of the condition analyzing system 2 shown in Fig 1. The condition analyzing system, as illustrated in Fig. 2, comprises a sensor unit 10 for producing a measured value. The measured value may be dependent on movement or, more precisely, dependent on vibrations. Alternatively the measured value may be dependent on temperature.

An embodiment of the condition analyzing system 2 is operative when a device 30 is firmly mounted on or at a measuring point on a machine 6. The device 30 mounted

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at the measuring point may be referred to as a stud 30. A stud 30 can comprise a connection coupling 32 to which the sensor unit 10 is removably attachable. The connection coupling 32 can, for example comprise double start threads for enabling the sensor unit to be mechanically engaged with the stud by means of a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn rotation.

A measuring point 12 can comprise a threaded recess in the casing of the machine. A stud 30 may have a protruding part with threads corresponding to those of the recess for enabling the stud to be firmly attached to the measuring point by introduction into the recess like a bolt.

Alternatively, a measuring point can comprise a threaded recess in the casing of the machine, and the sensor unit 10 may comprise corresponding threads so that it can be directly introduced into the recess. Alternatively, the measuring point is marked on the casing of the machine only with a painted mark.

The machine 6 exemplified in Fig. 2 may have a rotating shaft with a certain shaft diameter d_1 . The shaft in the machine 24 may rotate at a certain speed of rotation V_1 when the machine 6 is in use.

The sensor unit 10 may be coupled to the apparatus 14 for analysing the condition of a machine. The analysis apparatus 14 comprises a sensor interface 40 for receiving a measured signal or measurement data, produced by the sensor 10. The sensor interface 40 is coupled to a data processing means 50 capable of controlling the operation of the analysis apparatus 14 in accordance with program code. The data processing means 50 is also coupled to a memory 60 for storing said program code.

According to an embodiment of the invention the sensor interface 40 comprises an input 42 for receiving an analog signal, the input 42 being connected to an analogue-

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to-digital (A/D) converter 44, the digital output of which is coupled to the to the data processing means 50.

The program memory 60 is preferably a non-volatile memory. The memory 60 may be a read/write memory, i.e. enabling both reading data from the memory and writing new data onto the memory 60. According to an embodiment the program memory 60 is embodied by a FLASH memory. The program memory 60 may comprise a first memory segment 70 for storing a first set of program code 80 which is executable so as to control the analysis apparatus 14 to perform basic operations (Figure 2 and Figure 3). The program memory may also comprise a second memory segment 90 for storing a second set of program code 100.

According to some embodiments of the invention the second set of program code is initially disabled so as to prohibit execution of said second set of program code. The disabled data 100 may be enabled in response to reception of a key.

According to an embodiment of the invention the apparatus 14 comprises an interface means for receiving the key.

The data processing means 50 is also coupled to a read/write memory 52 for data storage. Moreover, the data processing means 50 may be coupled to an analysis apparatus communications interface 54. The analysis apparatus communications interface 54 provides for bi-directional communication with a measuring point communication interface 56 which is attachable on, at or in the vicinity of the measuring point on the machine.

The measuring point 12 comprises a connection coupling 32, a readable and writeable information carrier 58, and a measuring point communication interface 56.

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The writeable information carrier 58, and the measuring point communication interface 56 may be provided in a separate device 59 placed in the vicinity of the stud 30, as illustrated in Figure 2. Alternatively the writeable information carrier 58, and the measuring point communication interface 56 may be provided within the stud 30. This is described in more detail in WO 98/0131, the content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

The sensor unit 10 comprises a vibration transducer, the sensor unit being structured to physically engage the connection coupling of the measuring point so that vibrations of the machine at the measuring point are transferred to the vibration transducer.

The analysis apparatus 14 comprises an analog-to-digital converter 44 electrically connected to receive an output delivered by the sensor unit 10, a microprocessor 50 electrically connected to receive an output of the analog-to-digital converter, and an analysis apparatus communication interface 54 connected to the microprocessor.

The system 2 is arranged to allow bidirectional communication between the measuring point communication interface 56 and the analysis apparatus communication interface 54. The measuring point communication interface 56 and the analysis apparatus communication interface 54 are preferably constructed to allow wireless communication. According to an embodiment the measuring point communication interface and the analysis apparatus communication interface are constructed to communicate with one another by radio frequency (RF) signals. This embodiment includes an antenna in the measuring point communication interface 56 and another antenna the analysis apparatus communication interface 54.

Embodiments of the measuring point 12 and the communications interfaces 54/56 are described in more detail in WO 98/0131, the content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

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Figure 3 is a simplified illustration of an embodiment of the memory 60 and its contents. The simplified illustration is intended to convey understanding of the general idea of storing different program functions in memory 60, and it is not necessarily a correct technical teaching of the way in which a program would be stored in a real memory circuit. The first memory segment 70 stores program code for controlling the analysis apparatus 14 to perform basic operations. Although the simplified illustration of Figure 3 shows pseudo code, it is to be understood that the program code 80 may be constituted by machine code, or any level program code that can be executed or interpreted by the data processing means 50 (Fig.2).

The second memory segment 90, illustrated in Figure 3, stores a second set of program code 100. The program code in segment 90, when run on the data processing means 50, will cause the analysis apparatus 14 to perform an added function. The added function may comprise an advanced mathematical processing of a measured signal received via the sensor interface 40. The added function, however, will be enabled and available only if the corresponding key or key word has been entered.

A keyword embodiment

According to an embodiment of the analysis apparatus 14 (Figure 2), the interface means comprises a user input interface 102, whereby an operator may introduce the key in the form of a code word, also referred to as key word. According to this embodiment the first set of program code 80 in the apparatus 14 comprises a program routine for requesting a code word, and for determining whether a received code word is accepted. According to an embodiment the user input interface 102 comprises a set of buttons 104. An embodiment of the analysis apparatus 14 comprises a user output interface. The user output interface may comprise a display unit 106. The data processing means 50, when it runs a basic program function

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provided in the basic program code 80, provides for user interaction by means of the user input interface 102 and the display unit 106. The set of buttons 104 may be limited to a few buttons, such as for example five buttons, as illustrated in Figure 2. A central button 107 may be used for an ENTER or SELECT function, whereas other, more peripheral buttons may be used for moving a cursor on the display 106. In this manner it is to be understood that symbols and text, such as the above mentioned code word, may be entered into the apparatus 14 via the user interface. The display unit 106 may, for example, display a number of symbols, such as the letters of alphabet, while the cursor is movable on the display in response to user input so as to allow the user to input a code word and/or other information.

The enabled, executable version 110 of the second set of program code 100 may comprise an analysis routine for processing measured signals or measurement data received on the input 40 from the sensor 10.

According to an embodiment of the invention the second set of program code 100 is disabled by means of encryption. Hence, according to this embodiment the second set of program code 100 is an encrypted set of data 100. The encrypted data 100 is decryptable. Decryption may be achieved by means of a decryption program routine, provided that a correct decryption key, e.g. in the form of a data word, is received. The decryption routine may be comprised in one of the basic functions 80, illustrated in Fig 3.

In the course of decrypting an encrypted set of data 100, the decrypted data 110 may be stored at a third memory location 112. When decrypted, the second set of program code is an executable version 110 of the second set of program code 100. Hence, the memory location 90 may store a disabled version of computer program code and, provided a correct key has been entered, the memory location 112 will provide access to an enabled version of that computer program code.

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Although, in the above, enabling of program functions has been described in detail only for a single program function, it to be understood that a large number of analysis functions may be provided in a disabled state in the analysis apparatus 14.

The number disabled program functions stored by the apparatus 14 may be in the range from one to twenty-five, or even more. This advantageously leads to a wide selection of functions, and the apparatus 14 may be sold at a competitive and relatively low price in a version where only one or a few of the program functions are enabled. According to a preferred embodiment an enabled program function remains enabled for a limited amount of use such that when the limited amount of use has been consumed, the program function will automatically become disabled again. An additional amount of use of the program function can be added by means of a dedicated usage enabling procedure. Execution of the dedicated usage enabling procedure may require clearance by the distributor. This embodiment of the invention advantageously makes it possible to provide, on the market at a competitively low price, a condition analysis system comprising a wide variety of program functions so that users may obtain a very versatile instrument at low initial cost. The user may instead pay a certain amount of money for obtaining an additional amount of use of a selected program function.

According to an embodiment of the invention the apparatus 14 stores at least five different disabled program functions, when the apparatus is ready to be delivered to a customer. According to another embodiment the apparatus 14 stores at least fifteen different disabled program functions upon delivery to a customer. According to some embodiments at least two of the initially disabled program functions are, when enabled, for generating indications of the condition of a machine in response to measured vibrations. According to preferred embodiments at least half of the initially disabled program functions are, when enabled, for generating indications of the condition of a machine in response to measured vibrations.

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Each one of the disabled functions can be individually enabled in dependence of a key. According to some embodiments of the invention each function is individually enabled dependent on a unique key word. According to an embodiment a group of program functions can be enabled in dependence of one single keyword.

A Mechanical Key Embodiment

According to another embodiment the interface means in the apparatus 14 comprises a receptor for receiving a mechanical key (not shown). According to this embodiment an operator may introduce the key in the form of a mechanical key for the purpose of enabling an additional analysis apparatus function. The receptor for receiving a key may comprise contact means operating to enable the disabled data 100 on reception of the corresponding correct key. According to one version of this embodiment the correct mechanical key may be rotated to cause a contact device to close an electric contact coupled to the memory 60, thereby enabling the reading of a range of memory addresses. Following such a procedure, the data processing means 50 is capable of reading and executing the second set of program code 100 which is stored on said second memory segment 90, i.e. on said range of memory addresses.

A Procedure and a System Providing Tailored Functionality for Evaluating the Condition of a Machine

Analysis of a machine's vibration signature is valuable for reducing unscheduled down time, reducing downtime for repair, minimizing periodic disassembly of a machine for inspection and greatly reducing the probability of catastrophic and unexpected machine failure.

According to one embodiment of the invention, a manufacturer of condition monitoring systems may provide customers with a very versatile, yet non-expensive analysis apparatus 30. The analysis apparatus 14 according to this embodiment

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allows for "tailored" outfit of Machine Condition Monitoring functions (MCM functions), in accordance with the individual preference of each customer. Potential customers of condition monitoring apparatus range from maintenance personnel - spending all their professional time analysing the condition of machines with the use of advanced analysis functions - to workshop personnel with a need to make an occasional control of a few machines.

The workshop personnel usually require only a few basic monitoring functions for detection of whether the condition of a machine is normal or abnormal. On detecting an abnormal condition, the workshop personnel may call for professional maintenance personnel to establish the exact nature of the problem, and for performing the necessary maintenance work. The professional maintenance personnel frequently needs and uses a broad range of evaluation functions making it possible to establish the nature of, and/or cause for, an abnormal machine condition. Hence, different users of an analysis apparatus 14 may pose very different demands on the function of the apparatus.

In order to satisfy this broad range of demands, an embodiment of the present condition analysis system advantageously includes an apparatus 14 having a plurality of disabled Machine Condition Monitoring functions, each one of which may be enabled and activated on demand. Such an apparatus 14 for monitoring the condition of a machine can comprise:

at least one input 42 for receiving measurement data from a sensor 10 for surveying a measuring point 12 of the machine; and

data processing means 50 for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing at least two condition monitoring functions F1, F2. At least one of said plurality of condition monitoring functions F1, F2 has a locked state and an unlocked state; said locked state prohibiting complete execution of said condition monitoring function; and said unlocked state allowing execution of said condition monitoring

function. The apparatus 14 also comprises means 141 (Figure 4) for changing the state of a selected condition monitoring function F1, F2 between the locked state and the unlocked state.

This solution advantageously provides the analysis apparatus with an improved versatility. A manufacturer can manufacture the apparatus in a single fashion, and a supplier can sell the apparatus in several versions. More precisely, an apparatus having two individually lockable/unlockable functions can be provided in the following versions:

- with only the first function F1 unlocked;
- with only the second function F2 unlocked;
- with the first function F1 and the second function F2 unlocked.

Hence, a supplier can offer the apparatus in three versions, and this allows for selling it at different price levels dependent on the functionality included. Each client is therefore provided with a choice as to which functions to choose.

The data processing means may comprise a large number of locked or disabled functions F1, F2, F3... Fn, where n is a positive integer. Each one of the functions F1, F2, F3... Fn may be individually enabled/unlocked or disabled/locked.

Figure 4 is a simplified illustration of a second embodiment of the memory 60 and its contents. As described above, the first memory segment 70 stores program code for controlling the analysis apparatus 14 to perform basic operations.

The second memory segment 90, illustrated in Figure 4, stores a second set of program code 100. The program code in segment 90, when run on the data processing means 50, will cause the analysis apparatus 14 to perform a first Machine Condition Monitoring function (MCM function) F1.

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The memory 60 may also include a third memory segment 120, as illustrated in Figure 4, storing a third set of program code 130. The program code in segment 120, when run on the data processing means 50, will cause the analysis apparatus 14 to perform a second Machine Condition Monitoring function F2.

The memory 60 may comprise a large number of functions F1, F2, F3... Fn, where n is a positive integer. Each one of the functions F1, F2, F3... Fn may be individually enabled/unlocked or disabled/locked as described elsewhere in this document.

Once a function F1, F2, F3... Fn has been enabled it may be individually activated on demand, e.g. by an operator, so that the program function causes the analysis apparatus to perform the tasks prescribed by the computer program function. The functions F1 and F2 have been described in Figure 4 as being stored on separate memory locations, for the purpose of simplifying the understanding of this embodiment of the invention. It is, however, to be understood that the functions F1, F2, F3... Fn may be stored in other manners.

Additionally, one function Fi, where i is a integer in the range 1..n, may use some, or all, of the program code for another function Fj, where j is an integer in the range 1..n. This means that one function Fi may use another function Fj as a sort of subroutine.

Examples of Machine Condition Monitoring functions

The condition monitoring functions F1, F2...Fn includes functions such as: vibration analysis, temperature analysis, shock pulse measuring, spectrum analysis of shock pulse measurement data, Fast Fourier Transformation of vibration measurement data, graphical presentation of condition data on a user interface, storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier on said machine, storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier in said apparatus, tachometering, imbalance detection, and misalignment detection.

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According to an embodiment the apparatus 14 includes the following functions:

F1 = vibration analysis;

F2= temperature analysis,

F3= shock pulse measuring,

F4= spectrum analysis of shock pulse measurement data,

F5= Fast Fourier Transformation of vibration measurement data,

F6= graphical presentation of condition data on a user interface,

F7= storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier on said machine,

F8= storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier 52 in said apparatus,

F9= tachometering,

F10= imbalance detection, and

F11= misalignment detection.

F12= Retrieval of condition data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine.

F13 = Performing vibration analysis function F1 and performing function F12

"Retrieval of condition data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" so as to enable a comparison or trending based on current vibration measurement data and historical vibration measurement data.

F14 = Performing temperature analysis F2; and performing function "Retrieval of condition data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" so as to enable a comparison or trending based on current temperature measurement data and historical temperature measurement data.

F15= Retrieval of identification data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine.

Embodiments of the function F7 "storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier on said machine", and F13 vibration analysis and retrieval of condition data is described in more detail in WO 98/0131, the content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

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The vibration analysis function F1 and shock pulse measuring F3 for the evaluation of the condition of a machine may comprise the step of obtaining a condition value by performing a measurement at the measuring point, such that the condition value is dependent on the actual condition of the machine. According to embodiments, the routines F1 and F3 may comprise the step of the microprocessor 50 requesting measured values from the sensor unit 10 (Fig 2). According to one embodiment of the invention the sensor unit comprises a transducer having a piezo-electric element. When the measuring point 12 vibrates, the sensor unit 10, or at least a part of it, also vibrates and the transducer then produces an electrical signal of which the frequency and amplitude depend on the mechanical vibration frequency and the vibration amplitude of the measuring point 12, respectively. The electrical signal is delivered to the analog-to-digital converter 44, which with a certain sampling frequency f_s converts the analog signal to consecutive digital words in a known way. The microcomputer 50 stores a series of digital words, which correspond to a time sequence of the electrical signal in the memory 60, and then performs an analysis of the signal sequence, whereby the frequency and amplitude of the signal may be determined. Consequently, a measured value for the vibration amplitude A_v and the vibration frequency f_v may be determined.

According to an embodiment of the above mentioned function F7 "storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier on said machine", one or both of the values vibration amplitude A_v and/or vibration frequency f_v are delivered to the communications interface 54 (Fig 2). The microcomputer 50, delivers data to the communications interface 54 for the purpose of transmitting such data to the readable and writeable information carrier 58. This may be achieved by means of the communications interfaces 54 and 56, as described above in connection with Figure 2.

The above mentioned function F12 "Retrieval of condition data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" comprises: acquiring a value, indicating the condition of the machine at an earlier point of time, from an information carrier 58 which is placed on, at or in the vicinity of the measuring point 12.

The above mentioned function F13 includes a combination of the above described functions F1 and F12. Hence function F13 includes "Performing vibration analysis" and performing "Retrieval of condition data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" so as to enable a comparison or trending based on current vibration measurement data and historical vibration measurement data. An embodiment of function F13 comprises the steps of:

producing an actual condition value, said value being dependent on the actual condition at the measuring point, and

acquiring a stored value, indicating the condition of the machine at an earlier point of time from an information carrier 58 which is placed on the machine 6.

The function F13 may also include presentation of the actual condition value and the stored value on the display 106 for indication of changes. Also, a plurality of stored condition values may be acquired, wherein each condition value is associated with a time and/or date so that trends may be presented on the display.

When the apparatus 14 executes the function F15 "Retrieval of identification data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" it obtains information indicative of the current machine and the current measuring point. Such identification data may be used for storage and retrieval of data in a data base in the memory 52. Such a data base may include stored condition values wherein each condition value is associated with a time and/or date. The retrieved identification data may be used for fetching the relevant previously stored data relating to the current measuring point.

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An embodiment of the function F15 "Retrieval of identification data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" includes the microcomputer retrieving interpretation information relating to the measuring point. The interpretation information may include technical type values such as a diameter value d1 and a rotational speed value V1 relating to a rotating shaft in the machine.

An embodiment of the function F12 "Retrieval of condition data from a writeable information carrier 58 on said machine" also includes retrieving interpretation information relating to the measuring point. With knowledge of the interpretation information d1 and V1, respectively, a measured vibration can be converted to an actual condition value Ka. A predetermined interpretation algorithm is stored in the memory 60, and starting from an amplitude value Av and interpretation information, such as d1 and V1, the micro-computer produces a corresponding condition value Ka dependent thereon. Such an interpretation algorithm is based on an embodiment of a method for producing a condition value described in the Swedish Laid-Open Document 339 576.

According to one embodiment, the interpretation algorithm is based on the machine classification standard ISO 2954.

A Usage Debiting/Crediting Procedure

Figure 5 is a flow chart illustrating an embodiment of a procedure according to the invention. An operator planning to perform a round of measurements may first consider what type of measurements and analysis is to be done, i.e. what type of Machine Condition Monitoring function is required. The choice of Machine Condition Monitoring function depends on the type of machinery to be inspected, and on how advanced an evaluation the operator intends to achieve, as described above.

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A user help function, provided among the basic functions 80 in the first memory segment 70, can be activated by the operator to provide information about the purpose of any individual function F1 - Fn. This can advantageously contribute to a stepwise increase of the competence of the operator, since the operator may start using relatively simple MCM functions and then, being informed by the user help function, the operator may choose to proceed to using more advanced functions.

Once the operator has decided that he will need to enable a presently disabled function from the group consisting of functions F1-Fn the operator may activate the Usage Debiting/Crediting Routine 132 (Fig. 4). The Usage Debiting/Crediting Routine 132 can also be used for changing the value of a level parameter. The value of the level parameter decides the extent to which the analysis apparatus 14 may be used, as described in further detail below.

The Usage Debiting/Crediting Routine 132 (Fig. 4) is one of the basic functions 80 in the first memory segment 70, which is described in connection with Fig 4 above.

By means of the user interface 102,106 (Figure 2) the operator can activate the Usage Debiting/Crediting Routine, as illustrated by step S110 in Fig.5.

In step S120 (Fig 5), the Usage Debiting/Crediting Routine 132 causes the apparatus 14 to display a list of the available functions, e.g. via the user interface 102/106 (Figure 2). This may include a listing of a plurality of different functions and an indication about status for each individual function. According to a preferred embodiment the status information indicates for each function whether it is disabled or enabled. For the enabled functions the status information may also include information about the remaining amount of use for the associated function. The remaining amount of use for the associated function is indicated by variables Use_F1 and Use_F2, respectively, for the functions illustrated in Figure 4. As illustrated in

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Figure 4, there may be a status field 142 associated with each function F1, F2, F3... Fn, the status field 142 comprising information about whether it is disabled or enabled and, when enabled, information about the remaining amount of use for the associated function. According to this embodiment the level parameter may be a counter value, herein referred to as "Use_F_k", where k is an integer indicating the association with the corresponding function F1, F2, F3... Fn. Hence, function F1 is associated with level parameter "Use_F₁", and function F2 is associated with level parameter "Use_F₂" etc.

In step S130 the operator selects to buy more usage of a function. In response thereto a request for an additional amount of usage is generated (S140).

According to an embodiment the request includes information identifying the function whose usage is to be increased, and payment information. The payment information identifies a person responsible for paying the cost of the requested usage or, alternatively the payment information can in itself effect payment. The payment information may include data such as a credit card number. According to another embodiment the payment information may include information indicating that payment has already been effected.

According to an embodiment, the above mentioned request includes information identifying the individual analysis apparatus, and the function whose usage is to be increased, and payment information.

The request is delivered to the premises 28 of a supplier (S150). According to an embodiment the request is delivered by means of the communications network 18 (Fig 1). Hence, request may be delivered from the apparatus 14 to the server computer 20, e.g. via data communication.

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At the supplier premises 28 the request is processed (S160), the processing including a verification step for establishing whether the request is to be granted or not. The verification may, for example, include an evaluation of the payment information to decide whether the payment information satisfies certain predetermined payment criteria. According to a preferred embodiment the request is processed automatically by the server computer 20.

According to an embodiment this payment information evaluation includes a step of checking whether the payment information indicates that payment has already been effected, or whether it merely indicates a person responsible for paying the cost. If the payment information merely indicates a person responsible for paying the cost, the server computer 20 may proceed to check with a dedicated database for establishing whether clearance may be given for this person. The dedicated database may include information about the financial situation for the person responsible for paying the cost. According to one embodiment, the server computer limits this clearance check to a verification using data in the database 22 internal to the premises of the supplier 28. According to another embodiment the payment evaluation includes a communication with a financial services database.

Step S170 illustrates that if step S160 results in the request being granted, the supplier will deliver a key to the client (S180). If, on the other hand, the request is not granted, the supplier computer 20 will generate a Request_denied-message. The Request_denied-message may be delivered to a supplier sales person (not shown) for the purpose of alerting the supplier about a failed attempt buy function usage. According to an embodiment, a Request_denied-message is also sent to client part 4 (See figure 1) for causing the apparatus 14 to display information to the effect that the request was denied. The Request_denied-message may include information indicative of the reason for denial of the request, as well as a copy of the original request message, as described in step S140 above.

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In step S190 the key is received in the apparatus. The reception of a key may be achieved as described above.

After reception, there is a verification procedure S200 for ascertaining the validity of the key. The result of the verification procedure S200 is an acceptance or a discarding of the key. If the key is not accepted, the apparatus will provide a non-acceptance indication by means of the user interface 106 (Step S210).

If the key is accepted the apparatus 14 will, in response to the key, amend (step S220) a level parameter "Use_F_k" to change an amount of usage status and/or the enabled/disabled parameter 143 for the selected function.

According to an embodiment, the key is associated with the selected function so that, when correctly applied to the apparatus 14, the key will increase the allowed amount of usage of that function. In other words, the key may cause a level parameter associated with the selected function to be amended. The level parameter associated with a selected function is a parameter whose purpose is to indicate how much the apparatus 14 may execute the selected function.

With reference to Fig 4, an embodiment of the invention involving a level parameter is described. According to this embodiment the level parameter may be a counter value, herein referred to as "Use_F_k", where k is an integer indicating the association with the corresponding function F₁, F₂, F₃... F_n. Hence, function F₁ is associated with level parameter "Use_F₁", and function F₂ is associated with level parameter "Use_F₂" etc. According to this embodiment, the key will include a first data portion for associating the key with the corresponding function F₁, F₂ or F₃ etc; and a second data portion for indicating the amount of use purchased.

After execution of step S220, the user interface of the apparatus will present information (step S230) for the purpose of allowing the operator to select a next

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operation to be executed. This includes selecting between e.g. starting a measurement, returning to step S110 for repeating the above procedure, or turning off the apparatus 14.

Example 1

This example describes an embodiment relating to the above-mentioned procedure. When a client has purchased e.g. ten units of use for the computer program routine "Function_F1" (See Fig. 4), the amount indication portion of the key may cause the parameter Use_F1 to increase by ten units. Hence, if the parameter Use_F1 had a numerical value zero (0) before reception of the key, then the parameter Use_F1 will have numerical value "10" (ten) after correct reception of that key. For each execution of the computer program routine "Function_F1" the numerical value of the parameter Use_F1 will be decreased by one (1). When the computer program routine "Function_F1" has been executed ten times so that the parameter Use_F1 again has the numerical value zero (0), the computer program routine "Function_F1" will become disabled.

In order to enable the computer program routine "Function_F1", the client can purchase a new amount of use by means of the procedure described above.

Example 2

This example describes an embodiment similar to the Example 1 embodiment above. It is noted that in the Example 1 embodiment the computer program routine "Function_F1" becomes disabled when the parameter Use_F1 reaches a first reference value (zero in the example).

The method may also include the steps of:

- reading a current value of said registered use;
- comparing said current value with a second reference value;
- registering use at a first rate when said current value is above the second reference value; and

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registering use at a second rate when said current value is below the second reference value.

This advantageously enables a supplier to sell usage at different costs. When, according to one embodiment, a user has paid for a certain amount A_p of usage, the second reference value is a level indicating that the amount A_p of usage already paid for has been spent. This means that any further use will be usage which has not yet been paid for. By the feature of registering such further use at a second rate it is possible to charge a higher cost per unit of usage for such further use.

An Embodiment of a Usage Registering Procedure

Figure 6 is a flow chart illustrating an embodiment of a procedure according to the invention.

The procedure may start with step S230, i.e. the user interface of the apparatus presents information for the purpose of allowing the operator to select a next operation to be executed.

In step S240 the operator selects to request the apparatus to perform a Condition analysis function. This means that the operator may select one of the functions whose use is to be registered. The operator may do this by means of the user interface 102,106.

In a step S250 (Figure 6) the computer program 80 (Figure 4) will in response to the operator input check whether the selected operation involves any of the of the functions whose use is to be registered. The functions whose use is to be registered includes the above discussed MCM functions $F1 - F_n$. A function whose use is to be registered is referred to as a "restricted function" in the following text.

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If the selection involves only unrestricted functions the apparatus 14 (Fig2) will initiate and perform such operation (step S260) and then return to step S230.

If a restricted function is selected, the computer program 80 (Figure 4) will in response thereto check whether the selected function is enabled or disabled (Step S270).

If the selected function is disabled, the computer program 80 will present information to this effect (S280), and offer to proceed to any of steps S230, step S110 or S120, described above. According to an embodiment, the program 80 will offer to proceed with step S470 in the procedure described in Figure 14.

If the selected function is enabled, the computer program 80 will register the use of the selected restricted function (S290), and execute the selected restricted function (Step S300). Although Fig. 6 illustrates a certain order between activities, it to be understood that the invention is not restricted to performing the steps in that particular order. In particular, the registration of use (step S290) may be performed before or after or sometime during the execution of the restricted function.

According to a preferred embodiment the use is registered by changing the value of a counter parameter Use_F_k. The index k in "Use_F_k" indicates association to function F_k. When the parameter Use_F_k has a value 100, this may indicate that onehundred units of use remains. One unit of use may correspond to one complete execution of the function F_k. Hence, according to an embodiment, the counter parameter Use_F_k can correspond to the number of times the function F_k may be used before all the allowed use has been spent. With reference to Figure 4 step S290 may therefore include amending the parameter Use_F_k in status field 142 for the selected function to update the information indicating the remaining amount of use.

After successful execution and registration of use the computer program 80 may update a status register or status field 142 (step S310). Such update may include

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updating any and all variables/parameters needed for delivering status information correctly next time step S120 is performed (See Fig 5 and corresponding description). Hence, step S310 may include detection of a usage parameter value Use_F_k indicating that a certain act is to be performed in response to the changed status. For example, if a parameter indicates that all usage for one or all restricted functions has been spent, the said certain act may include disabling the restricted function or functions. Such disabling may include erasing a decrypted version 110, so that only encrypted versions remain.

Figure 7 is a physical embodiment of an apparatus 14. The apparatus has an apparatus body; and a display 106 provided on at least one surface of said apparatus body. Also provided on the body is a user input interface 102 comprising a key board 103.

The apparatus body is portable; and it is shaped and adapted to enable a one-hand grip, as illustrated in figure 9. Figure 9 illustrates the apparatus 14 being gripped by a hand 140 of a user. Moreover the user input interface 102 is positioned and adapted so as to enable user interaction by means of the user hand 140. In the embodiment shown in Fig 9 the user input interface 102 is operable by means of a thumb 150 of the user.

Figure 8 is a side view of the apparatus shown in Figure 7. The apparatus body is provided with fasteners 160 for a wrist strap 170. The wrist strap 170 is illustrated in Figure 9.

The body also has a holder 180 for an elongated device. The elongated device may be a pen or a pointing device for user input via the display 106. The display 106 may be a touch sensitive display allowing user input by means of the pointing device. The display 106 therefore includes a display area which is provided with touch sensors 182, also referred to as a touch screen 182, co-operating with a touch input

interpreter. Hence, the display may comprise an LCD unit, for displaying images and text, having integrated touch sensor means for detecting user input via the display area.

The provision of touch sensors 182 for receiving user input via the area of the display 106 provides for an improved user interaction. For example, as described above, the function F13 may include presentation of an actual condition value and a plurality of stored condition values so that trends may be presented on the display 106, wherein each condition value is associated with a time and/or date. When such a trend is displayed, for example in the form of a curve indicating the temporal progression of the condition of the machine, the user may touch the screen at an interesting part of the curve for the purpose of obtaining information associated with that part of the curve. In response to such user interaction the apparatus may therefore display e.g. the time and date information associated with that part of the curve.

Figure 12 is a block diagram of an embodiment of the apparatus 14 shown in Figure 1 and/or figures 7 and 8. The apparatus according to the Figure 12 embodiment may comprise a memory 60 having a plurality of program functions F1, F2, F3... Fn, where n is a positive integer. Each one of the functions F1, F2, F3... Fn may be individually enabled/unlocked or disabled/locked.

The memory 60 includes program functions for causing the data processing means 50 to perform the methods described with reference to Figures 5 and 6. Hence, the memory 60 includes a program function 140 (Figure 4) for registering use of any of the functions F1, F2, F3... Fn. The program function 140 may be referred to as a logger, which operates to update the above mentioned use parameters Use_Fk.

Moreover, the memory 60 also includes a program function 141 for changing the state of an individual selected condition monitoring program function between an

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enabled state and a disabled state. The state control function 141 may operate to read the parameters Use_Fk, as described in connection with step S310 in Figure 6 above. The state control function 141 may operate to disable a function Fk in response to the outcome of a comparison between a parameter Use_Fk and a first reference value Rk. The first reference value Rk is a reference value indicative of a limit. The state control function is adapted to disable function Fk when the parameter Use_Fk reaches the first reference value Rk.

The apparatus 14 includes data processing means 50 in the form of a central processing unit (CPU) 50A co-operating with a Field Programmable Gate Array circuit (FPGA) 50B. According to an embodiment the central processing unit 50A operates to execute the basic functions 80, such as the program functions for causing execution of the methods described with reference to Figures 5 and 6. The Field Programmable Gate Array circuit 50B is programmable to execute the functions F1, F2, F3... ..Fk... ..Fn. In effect, the CPU 50A, in response to the basic program functions 80 and user input, operates to control the operation of the FPGA 50B.

The FPGA 50B is coupled to receive digital SPM data from an A/D-converter 44A, which is coupled to an input 42A for an analogue Shock Pulse Measurement signal (SPM signal). The FPGA 50B is also coupled to receive digital temperature data from an A/D-converter 44B, which is coupled to an input 42B for an analogue temperature measurement signal. The FPGA 50B is also coupled to receive digital vibration data from an A/D-converter 44C, which is coupled to an input 42C for an analogue vibration measurement signal. Moreover the FPGA 50B is coupled to receive digital data from an A/D-converter 44E, which is coupled to an input 42E for an analogue measurement signal indicative of a measured electric voltage or a measured electric current. The FPGA 50B is also coupled to an input 42D for receiving binary tachometering measurement signals.

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The FPGA 50B is also coupled to a communications interface 54 for bi-directional communication with a device 59 on a machine 6, as described in connection with Figure 2.

Moreover the apparatus 14 includes a user interface 102. The user interface 102 includes a display 106 having touch sensors 182 for associating information displayed at a certain position of the display area with user activation of the sensor at said certain position. In the block diagram of Figure 12 the touch sensor 182 is illustrated as a block separated from the display 106. In a physical embodiment, however, the touch sensors 182 are integrated with the display area 106, as illustrated in Figure 7, such that the touch sensors 182 detect user interaction with the display area 106.

The CPU 50A is coupled to a data port 16 as described in connection with Figure 1, for enabling communication with a supplier computer 20.

The apparatus 14 also includes clock functionality 210 for providing time and date information. This is useful for generating a time stamp, e.g. when a condition value has been produced, and the value is to be stored for future retrieval. Additionally, the time and date information may be used for controlling the enabling and disabling of functions F1, F2, F3... ..Fk... ..Fn. According to an embodiment, the apparatus 14 may receive, via port 16, a key comprising a code for enabling a selected function from a first predetermined date, such as e.g March 1, 2003, until a second date such as April 15 2003. Such a key may include a data portion indicative of the identity of the analysis apparatus, a data portion indicative of the function to be enabled, a data portion indicative of the first date and a code portion indicative of the second date.

Alternatively the key may cause a selected function to be enabled for a certain duration starting from a certain date.

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According to an embodiment the apparatus comprises a logger operating to register the amount of use for one, some or all condition monitoring functions, as described above. This may be done by counting the number of executions of the restricted functions, as described above. According to an embodiment a Reporting function is provided, among the Basic Program Functions 80 (Fig. 3 & 4), for causing the apparatus 14 to deliver a report about the accumulated registered use. The reporting function is adapted to deliver such a report with a certain periodicity. For example, the Reporting function may be set to deliver a report no less than once every 30 days. The reporting function is set to deliver the report via the port 16 for transmission to the supplier computer 20 via the communications network 18 (Fig 1). Upon reception of the report, the supplier computer may be adapted to cause an output to the supplier indicative of the amount of use accumulated for that particular analysis apparatus. Alternatively the supplier computer may be arranged to automatically generate an invoice with a certain regularity, such as no less than once every 30 days, the invoice thereafter being delivered to a user associated to the analysis apparatus. For this purpose the usage report may include data indicative the identity of the user. This may be achieved by providing unique identities for each analysis apparatus, and keeping, at the supplier, a data base 22 associating each unique analysis apparatus identity with a corresponding client/user. The reporting function co-operates with the timer functionality 210 such that if no usage report has been transmitted at the expiration of the certain period, the timer co-operates with the State control function 141 to disable one, several or all the restricted functions $F_1, F_2, F_3 \dots F_k \dots F_n$.

Figure 13A illustrates a part of memory 60 comprising a function F_k and an associated status field 142. The status field 142 includes a segment 143 for data indicative of the state of the associated function: enabled or disabled. The status field 142 also includes a segment 144 having data indicative of the cost C_{Fk} for executing the associated function F_k . For example, function F_1 may have a cost value $C_{Fk} = 1$ charging unit per unit of time, whereas function F_3 may have a cost value $C_{Fk} = 3$ charging units per unit of time. In this manner different functions may be charged at

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different cost rates, by providing a certain exchange rate between one charging unit and a certain monetary currency. For example one charging unit may correspond to x US cents, where x is a number such as 10, 15, 50, 100, 1000 or another number dependent on what price is suitable.

An alternative embodiment for registering use, i.e. an embodiment of step S290 in Figure 6, is as follows: The use maybe registered by counting a duration of execution of a restricted function, in which case the registration of use may include a registration of a start time in a step S290A (as indicated in Fig 6) and the registration of a stop time in a step S290B. In such an embodiment the step S290A may be performed immediately before the execution of the restricted function, and the step S290B is executed immediately thereafter. According to this embodiment the parameter Use_F_k may be indicative of a total duration of time the function F_k has been activated. Figure 13B illustrates a part of memory 60 according to this embodiment, comprising a function F_k and an associated status field 142_k. The parameter Use_F_k , indicative of an accumulated total duration of active time for the function F_k , is stored by the logger in a segment 220_k in status field 142_k. A reference duration value is stored in segment 230_k, and a cost factor may be stored in a segment 240_k. The reference duration value is set by reception of a key, and it indicates an amount of use that has been paid for. According to this embodiment the state control function may be arranged to disable Function F_k when the parameter Use_F_k in segment 220 is equal to the reference duration value in segment 230_k. Different charges per time unit for different functions F_k , F_i may be obtained by a multiplying the duration of execution of a restricted function F_k with a cost factor C_k , and multiplying the duration of execution of another restricted function F_i with a different cost factor C_i . The cost factors for functions F_k and F_i , respectively, may be stored in a memory segments 240_k and 240_i respectively.

Another Embodiment of a Usage Debiting/Crediting Procedure

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This embodiment differs from the Usage Debiting/Crediting Procedure described with relation to Figure 5 in that there is provided a centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 rather than separate accounts for each function. There is a plurality of restricted functions having individually settable states: either disabled or enabled. The enabling/disabling procedure is a separate procedure being performed in response to a state key associated with the selected function. There is a separate credit/debit key for allowing a supplier to amend the value of the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250.

According to this embodiment the request includes information identifying the individual analysis apparatus, and payment information. The key to be received may cause a level parameter associated with the use of all relevant functions in that individual analysis apparatus to be amended. Hence, such a level parameter may be associated with all MCM functions.

Whenever a client operator selects to use a restricted function, the amount of use is deducted from centralized debit/credit account 250. Only those functions which are in the enabled state can be activated for execution, provided the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 has a value above a first reference value. The first reference value is a limit value, such that if an operator attempts to execute a restricted function when the value of the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 is equal to, or exceeds the first reference value, then the registering routine causes the apparatus 14 to disable all restricted functions.

One version of this embodiment further comprises the steps of:

reading a current value of the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250;

comparing said current value with a second reference value;

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deducting credit units from the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 at a first rate when said current value is above the second reference value; and

deducting credit units from the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 at a second rate when said current value is below the second reference value.

This advantageously enables a supplier to sell usage at different costs. When, according to one embodiment, a user has paid for a certain amount A_p of usage, the second reference value is a level indicating that the whole amount A_p of prepaid usage has been spent. This means that any further use will be usage which has not yet been paid for. By the feature of registering such further use at a second rate it is possible to charge a higher cost per unit of usage for such further use.

Moreover, the amount of use may be charged at different rates for different functions by means of individual cost factors (C_k and C_b , respectively) associated with each individual function, as described above and as illustrated in Figures 13A and 13B.

The centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 may be stored in a memory location 260 in the memory 60, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 14 is a flow chart illustrating an embodiment of a procedure for delivering an apparatus 14, and for adding use or functionality by means of a key from the supplier part 28. The method also relates to an embodiment of a method for generating a request for such a key or code. Such a key/code may be used for amending the centralized debit/credit account parameter 250 and/or for enabling a disabled function. Step S610 in Figure 14 may include the procedure according to Figure 6, starting e.g. with step S230.

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Figure 10 is a top view of an embodiment of the apparatus 14, illustrating the physical dimensions thereof. Figure 11 is a side view of the apparatus shown in Figure 10.

The display 106 has an extension x_d in a first direction and an extension Y_d in a orthogonal direction such that the display area is at least 4125 mm^2 .

The apparatus body has a first portion 190 adapted for gripping by a user. The first portion has an extension x_1 in a first direction, an extension y_1 in a second direction. The body has an extension z_1 in a third direction, as illustrated in Figure 11. The body also has a second body portion 200 having an extension x_2 in a first direction, and an extension y_2 in a second direction. The second portion comprises at least a part of the display 106.

According to an embodiment:

- x_1 is less than 80 mm
- y_1 is less than 140mm
- z_1 is less than 35 mm
- x_2 is less than 100 mm
- y_2 is less than 160 mm
- x_d is at least 60 mm
- y_d is at least 80 mm

This embodiment provides an apparatus 14 having a body volume of less than $952\,000 \text{ mm}^3$, and the display 106 has a display area of at least 4800 mm^2 . Therefore the apparatus 14 is easily portable in a handheld manner, whereas the user interface is advantageously user friendly by means of a large display in relation to the body volume of the apparatus.

According to another embodiment :

- x_1 is less than 65 mm

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y1 is less than 145mm

z1 is less than 35 mm

x2 is less than 80 mm

y2 is less than 145 mm

xd is at least 60 mm

yd is at least 80 mm

This embodiment provides an apparatus 14 having a body volume of less than $735\,875\text{ mm}^3$, and the display 106 has a display area of at least 4800 mm^2 . This embodiment of the apparatus 14 is even easier to carry in a handheld manner, while providing a large display in relation to the body volume of the apparatus.

According to yet another embodiment :

x1 is less than 60 mm

y1 is less than 120mm

z1 is less than 30 mm

x2 is less than 80 mm

y2 is less than 140 mm

xd is at least 60 mm

yd is at least 80 mm

This embodiment provides an apparatus 14 having a body volume of less than $552\,000\text{ mm}^3$, and the display 106 has a display area of at least 4800 mm^2 .

According to another embodiment the apparatus 14 has a body volume of less than $1006\,250\text{ mm}^3$, and said display has a display area of at least 4800 mm^2 . According to another embodiment the apparatus 14 has a body volume of less than $800\,000\text{ mm}^3$.

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Claims

1. An apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, comprising:
 - at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;
 - data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing a plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn); and
 - a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).
2. An apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, comprising:
 - at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;
 - data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing a plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).
3. The apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:
 - a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).
4. The apparatus according to claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein
 - at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) generates said condition data in response to measurement data indicative of vibration.
5. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 4, wherein

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said at least one input includes an input adapted to receive shock pulse measurement data; said adapted input comprising means for treatment of said shock pulse measurement data and delivery of said treated data to said data processing means.

6. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 5, wherein

at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) generates said condition data in response to measurement data indicative of temperature.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein

said at least one input includes an input adapted to receive measurement data indicative of temperature; said adapted input comprising means for treatment of said temperature measurement data and delivery of said treated data to said data processing means.

8. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 7, wherein

said at least one input includes at least one analogue-to-digital converter coupled so as to enable reception of an analogue signal from said sensor and delivery of a corresponding digital signal to said data processing means.

9. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 8, wherein

said plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) includes one or more functions selected from the group consisting of: vibration analysis, temperature analysis, shock pulse measuring, spectrum analysis of shock pulse measurement data, Fast Fourier Transformation of vibration measurement data, graphical presentation of condition data on a user interface, storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier on said machine, storage of condition data in a writeable information carrier in said apparatus, tachometering, imbalance detection, misalignment detection.

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10. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 9, further comprising:
a communication port (16); wherein
said apparatus is adapted to be capable of delivering data indicative of said registered use on said communication port (16).
11. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 10, wherein:
at least one of said plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) has an enabled state and a disabled state.
12. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 10, wherein:
all or several of said plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) have an enabled state and a disabled state such that each of said all or several condition monitoring functions can be individually enabled or disabled.
13. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 12, further comprising:
means for comparing said registered use with a first reference value,
means for disabling said data processing means or at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to the outcome of said comparison.
14. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 13, further comprising:
key reception means adapted to allow further use of said data processing means in response to reception of a first key.
15. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 14, further comprising:
key reception means adapted to allow further use of a selected one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to reception of a key associated with said selected function.
16. The apparatus according to claim 14 or 15, wherein:

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said key reception means includes a communication port (16); and
said key includes a key word comprising information indicative of an amount of usage to be allowed.

17. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 16, further comprising:

a user interface for allowing an operator to indicate a desire to execute a condition monitoring function (F1, F2,Fn);

means for checking whether the indicated function is disabled or enabled;

means for causing execution of said indicated function when enabled.

18. The apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising:

means for causing the data processing means to present information to the effect that the indicated function cannot be executed when the indicated function is disabled.

19. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 18, further comprising:

means for allowing an operator to indicate a desire to obtain an increased amount of use of a selected condition monitoring function (F1, F2,Fn);

means for generating a usage request message so that it includes information identifying said selected condition monitoring function (F1, F2,Fn).

20. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 19, wherein:

said logger is adapted to store at least two parameters (Use_F₁, Use_F₂);

a first one of said at least two parameters being associated with an amount of use of a first condition monitoring function (F1, F2, Fn), and
a second one of said at least two parameters being associated with an amount of use of a second condition monitoring function (F1, F2, Fn).

21. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 20, further comprising:

means for reading a current value of said registered use;

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means for comparing said current value with a second reference value;

means for registering use at a first rate when said current value is above the second reference value; and

means for registering use at a second rate when said current value is below the second reference value.

22. The apparatus according to any of claims 1 - 21, wherein:

said data processing means includes a Field Programmable Gate Array circuit.

23. The apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, having:

an apparatus body; and

a display provided on, at or in, said apparatus body.

24. The apparatus according to claim 23, wherein:

said display has a display area of at least 4125 mm^2 .

25. The apparatus according to claim 23 or 24, wherein:

said apparatus body has a body volume of less than $1006\,250 \text{ mm}^3$.

26. The apparatus according to any of claims 23 - 25, wherein:

said display has a display area of at least 4800 mm^2 .

27. The apparatus according to claim 23 or 24, wherein:

said apparatus body has a body volume of less than $800\,000 \text{ mm}^3$.

28. The apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein:

said apparatus body is portable; and

said apparatus body is shaped and adapted to enable a one-hand grip;

said apparatus body including user interaction means adapted to enable user interaction by means of said one hand.

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29. The apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein:
said apparatus body is houses readable and writeable memory means having a storage capacity exceeding 8 megabits.
30. The apparatus according to claim 29, wherein:
said storage capacity exceeds 240 megabits.
31. The apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein:
said apparatus body houses at least two data processing devices; one of said data processing devices being a Field Programmable Gate Array.
32. The apparatus according to any of the preceding claims, wherein:
said registered use is a parameter indicative of a number of executions of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).
33. The apparatus according to any of claims 1-31, wherein:
said registered use is a parameter indicative of an extent of time.
34. The apparatus according to any of the proceeding claims, wherein:
at least some of said plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) is at least partly embodied by computer program code.
35. An apparatus for monitoring the condition of a machine, comprising:
at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;
data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing a at least two condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn);

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at least one of said plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) having a locked state and an unlocked state; said locked state prohibiting complete execution of said condition monitoring function; and said unlocked state allowing execution;

means for changing the state of a selected condition monitoring function (F1, F2,Fn) between the locked state and the unlocked state.

36 The apparatus according to claim 35, further comprising:

key reception means adapted to allow use of a selected one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to reception of a key associated with said selected function;

a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).

means for comparing said registered use with a first reference value,

means for disabling said data processing means or at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) in response to the outcome of said comparison.

37. The apparatus according to claim 35, wherein

said data processing means comprises means for performing a plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn); all or several of said plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn) having a locked state and an unlocked state such that each of said all or several condition monitoring functions can be individually locked or unlocked.

38. The apparatus according to any of claims 35-37, wherein:

said apparatus body is houses readable and writeable memory means having a storage capacity exceeding 8 megabits.

39. The apparatus according to claim 38, wherein:

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said storage capacity exceeds 240 megabits.

40. The apparatus according to any of claims 35-39, wherein:

said apparatus body houses at least two data processing devices; one of said data processing devices being a Field Programmable Gate Array.

41. A method of operating a system for analysing the condition of a machine, the system comprising a supplier part and a client part; said client part having:

a sensor for obtaining measurement data when said sensor is applied at a measuring point on the machine; and

an evaluator for generating condition data dependent on said measurement data;

the method comprising the step of:

controlling said evaluator so as to disable at least a part of said evaluator after an amount of use.

42. The method according to claim 41 further comprising the step of:

measuring or detecting use of said evaluator; and wherein

said disabling is performed in response to said measured or detected use when said measured or detected use is indicative of a certain amount of use of said evaluator.

43. The method according to claim 41 or 42 wherein:

said disabling can be avoided by the reception, at said client part, of a first key.

44. The method according to claim 41 or 42, comprising the steps of:

enabling at least a part of said evaluator in response to a first key.

45. The method according to claim 43 or 44, comprising the steps of:

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delivering said first key from said supplier part.

46. The method according to claim 43 or 44, comprising the steps of:

receiving, at said supplier part, a request for an amount of use for said evaluator; said request including information indicative of an identity of said evaluator;

generating, at said supplier part, said first key in dependence on said identity information; and

delivering said first key from said supplier part after a clearance of said request;

enabling further use of said evaluator in response to reception, at said client part, of said first key.

47. An apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, comprising:

at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;

data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing a plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn);

a memory having an account value;

a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn);

means for comparing said registered use with said account value;

wherein

said apparatus is adapted to disable at least one of said functions in response to a predetermined outcome of said comparison.

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Abstract

An apparatus for analysing the condition of a machine, comprising:

at least one input for receiving measurement data from a sensor for surveying a measuring point of the machine;

data processing means for processing condition data dependent on said measurement data; said data processing means comprising means for performing a plurality of condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn); and

a logger for registering use of at least one of said condition monitoring functions (F1, F2,Fn).

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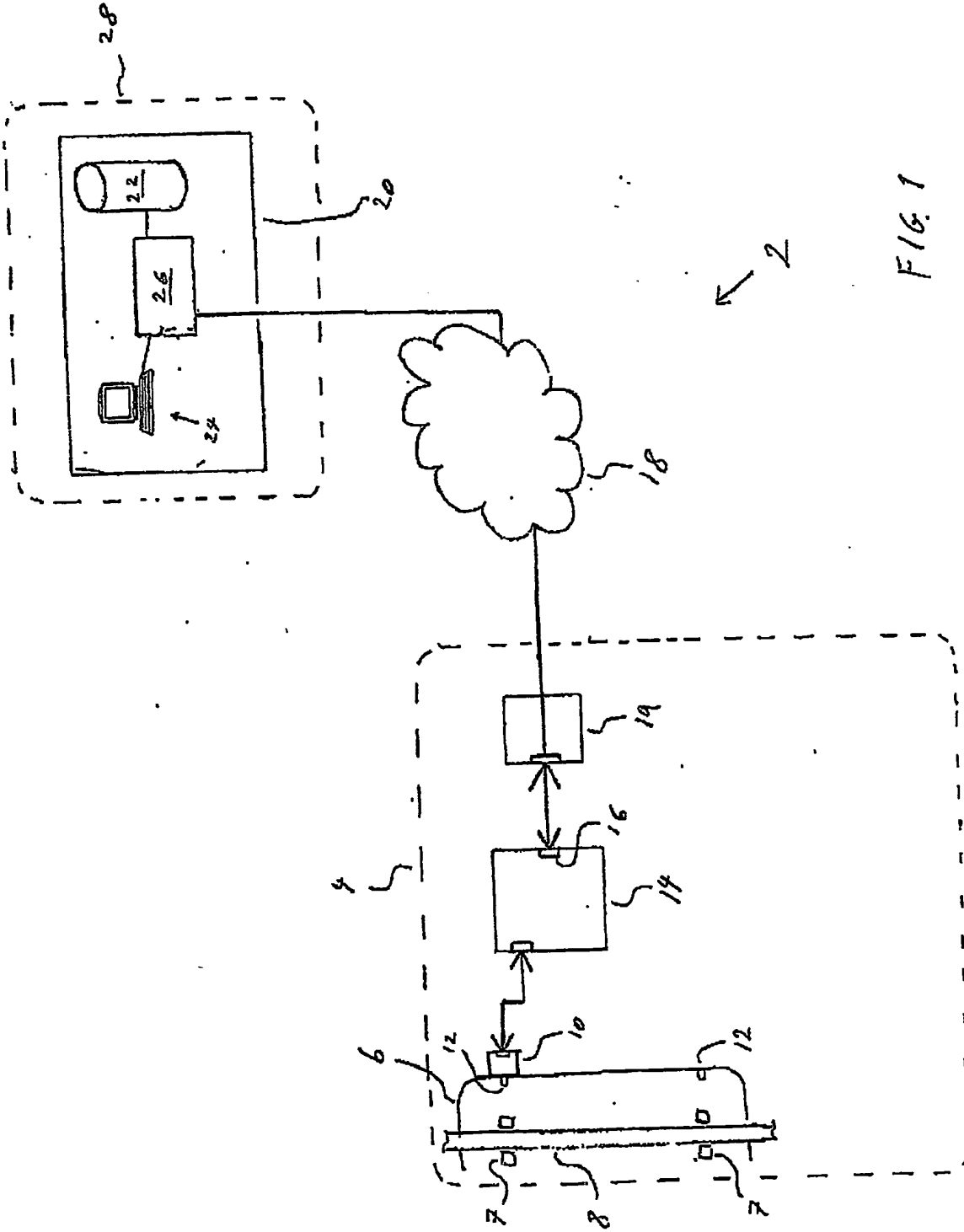


FIG. 1

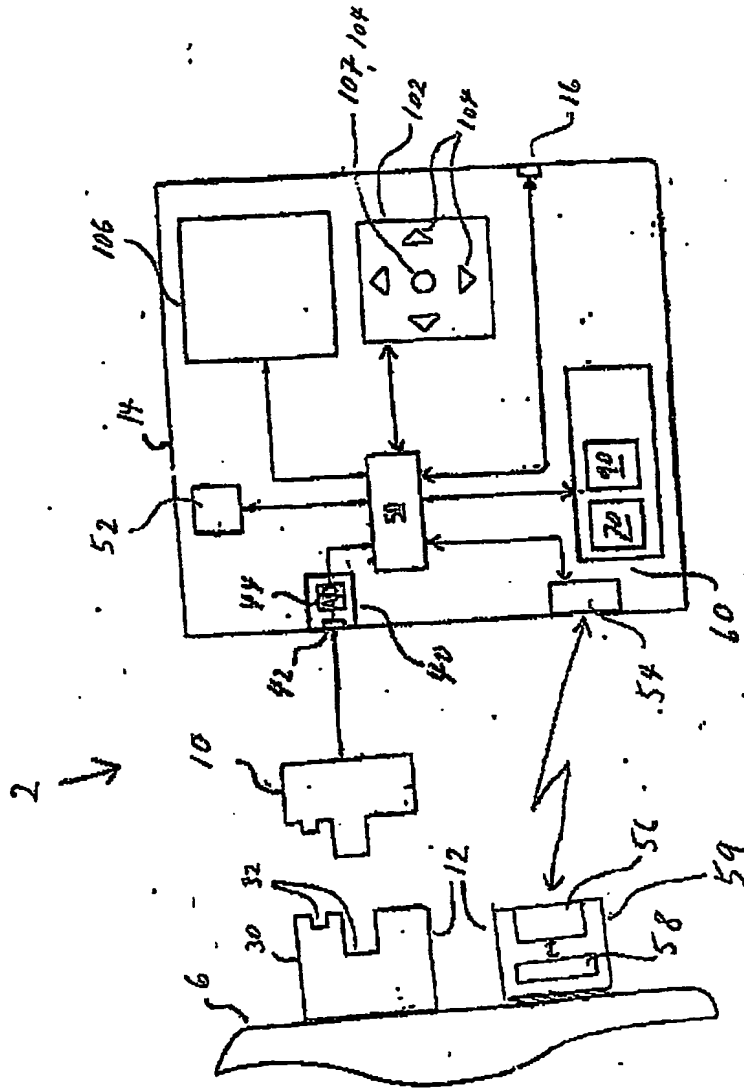


FIG 2

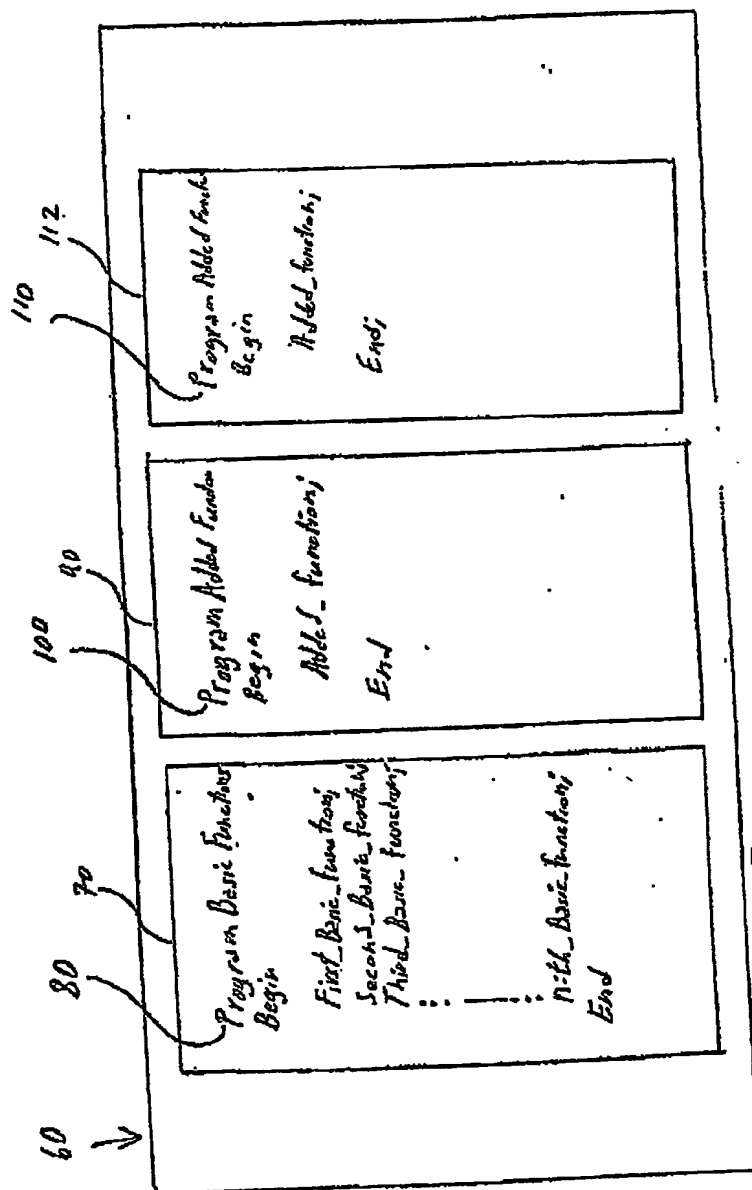


Fig. 3.

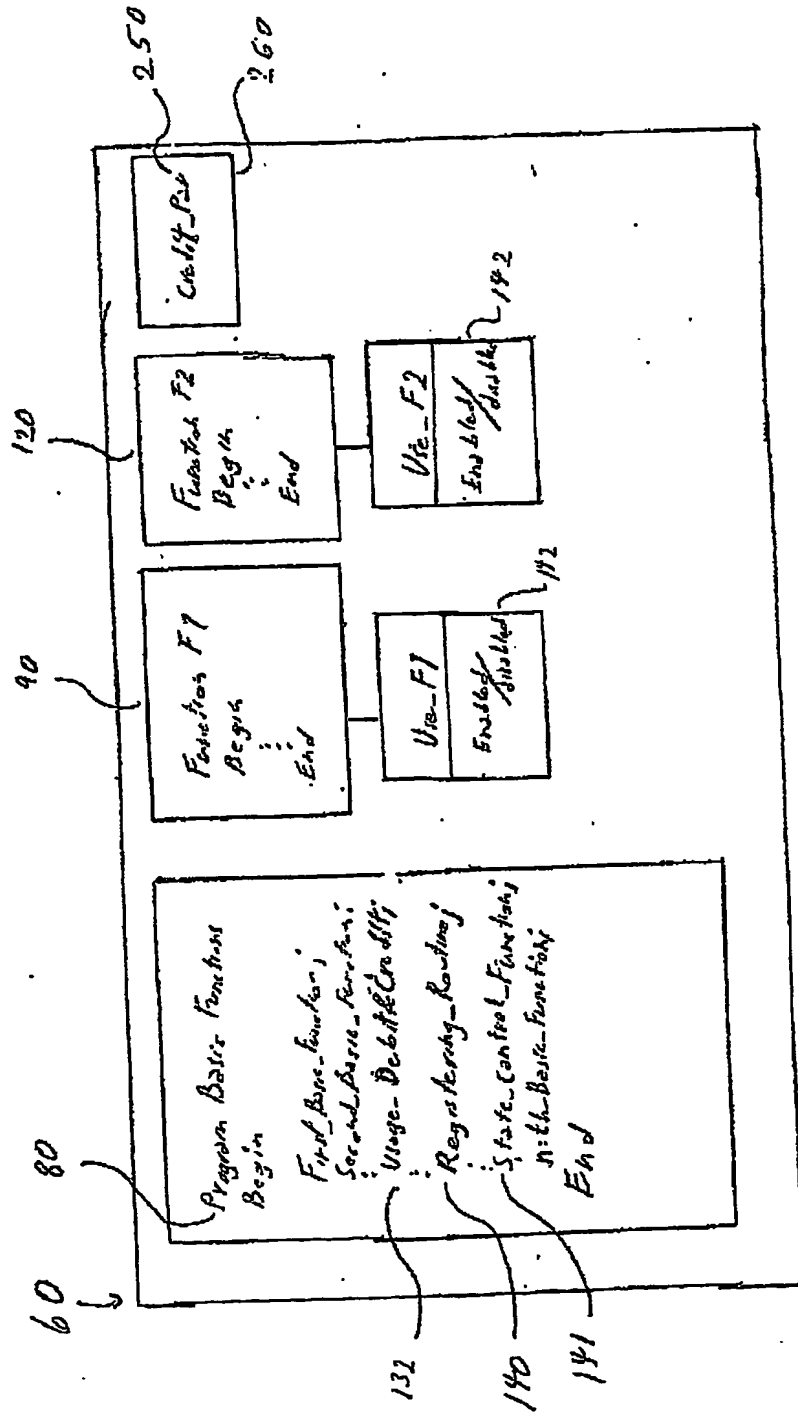


FIG. 4

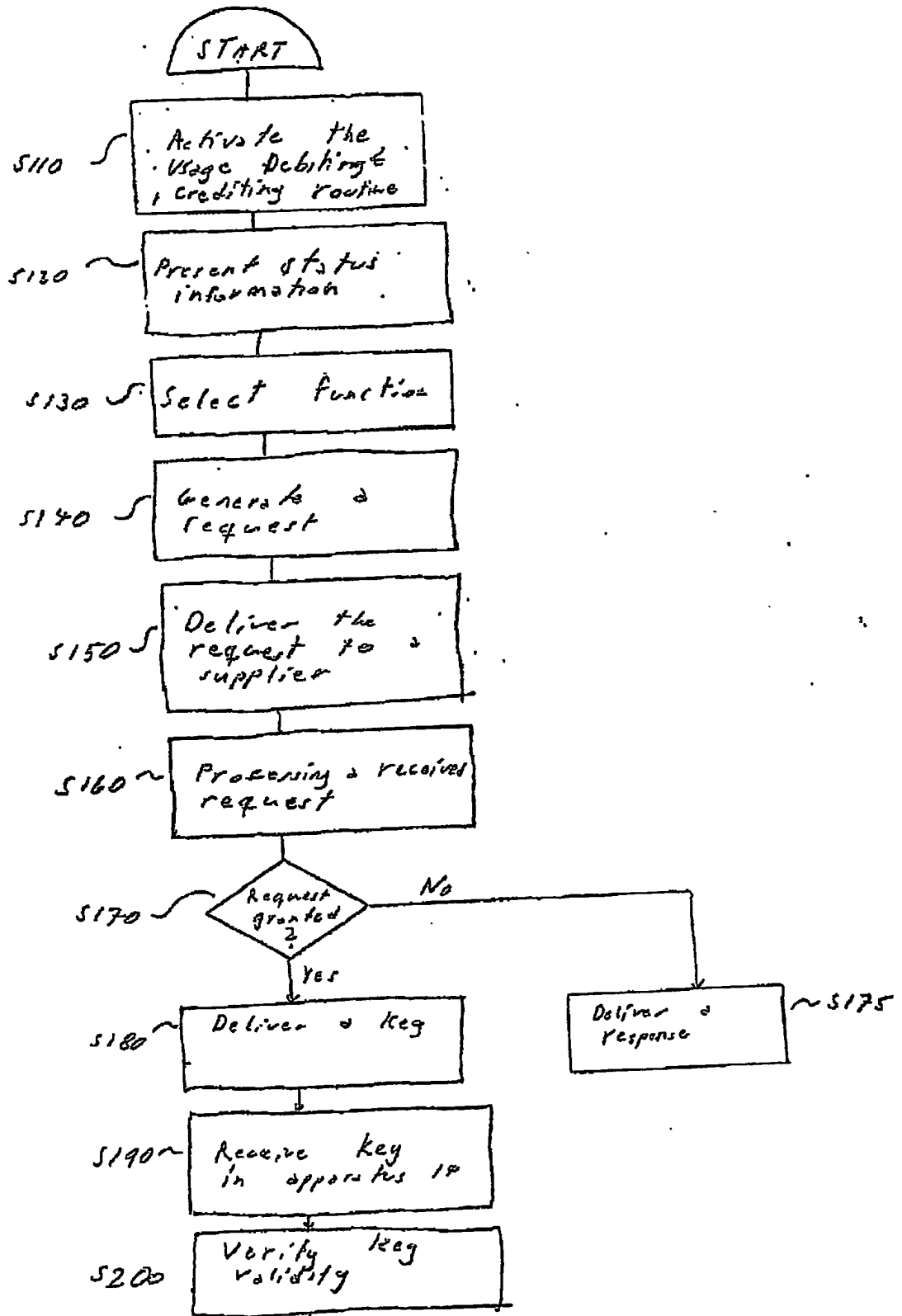


FIG 5A

To Fig 5B

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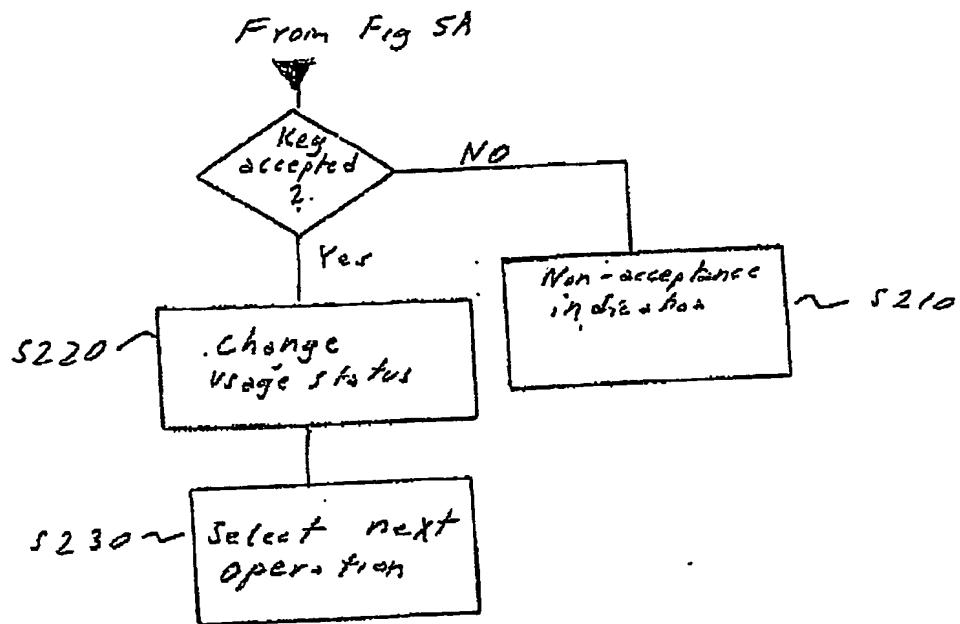


FIG. 5B

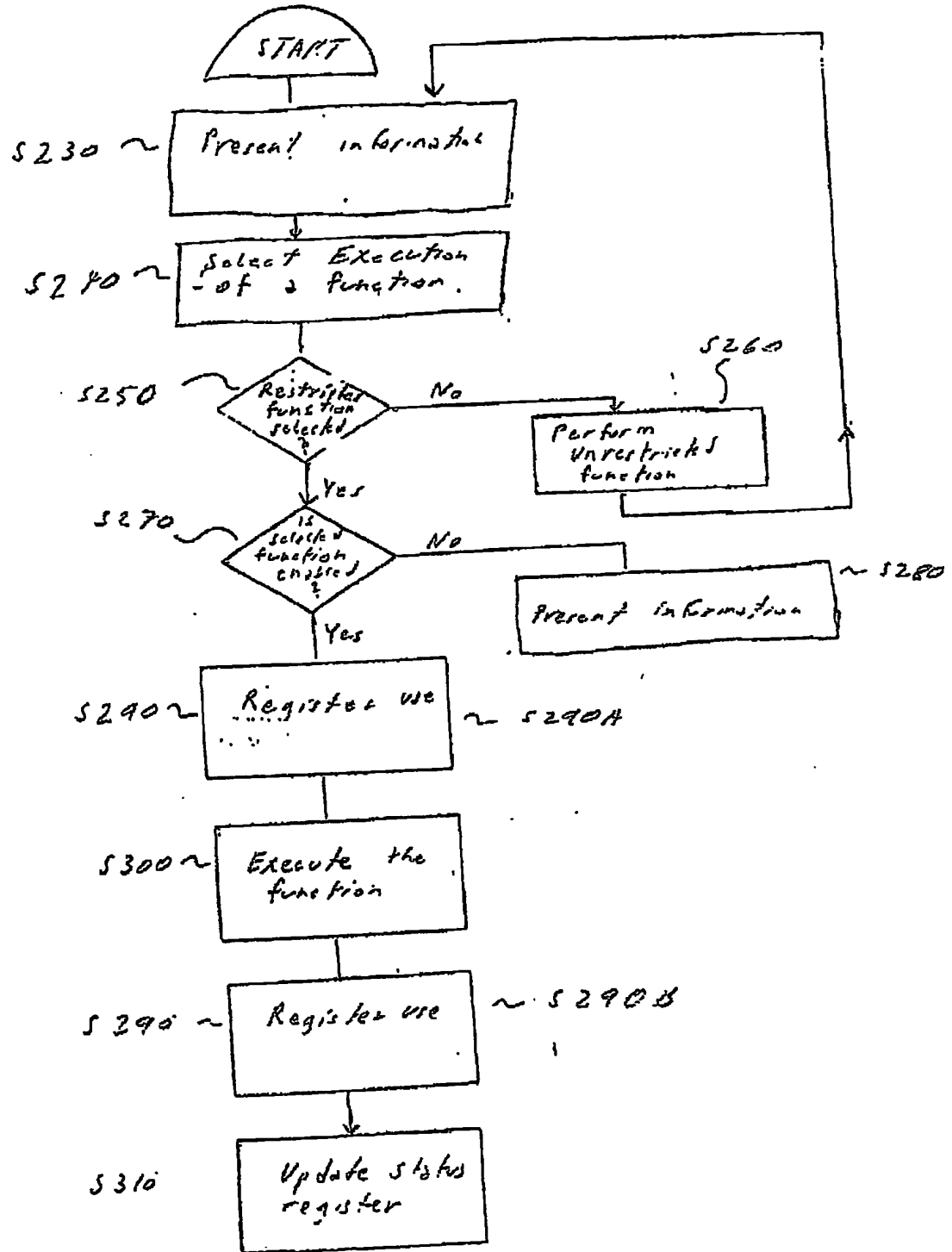
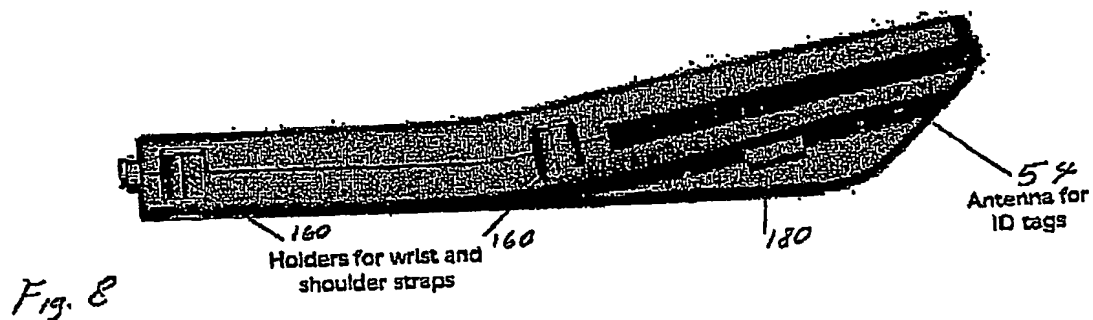
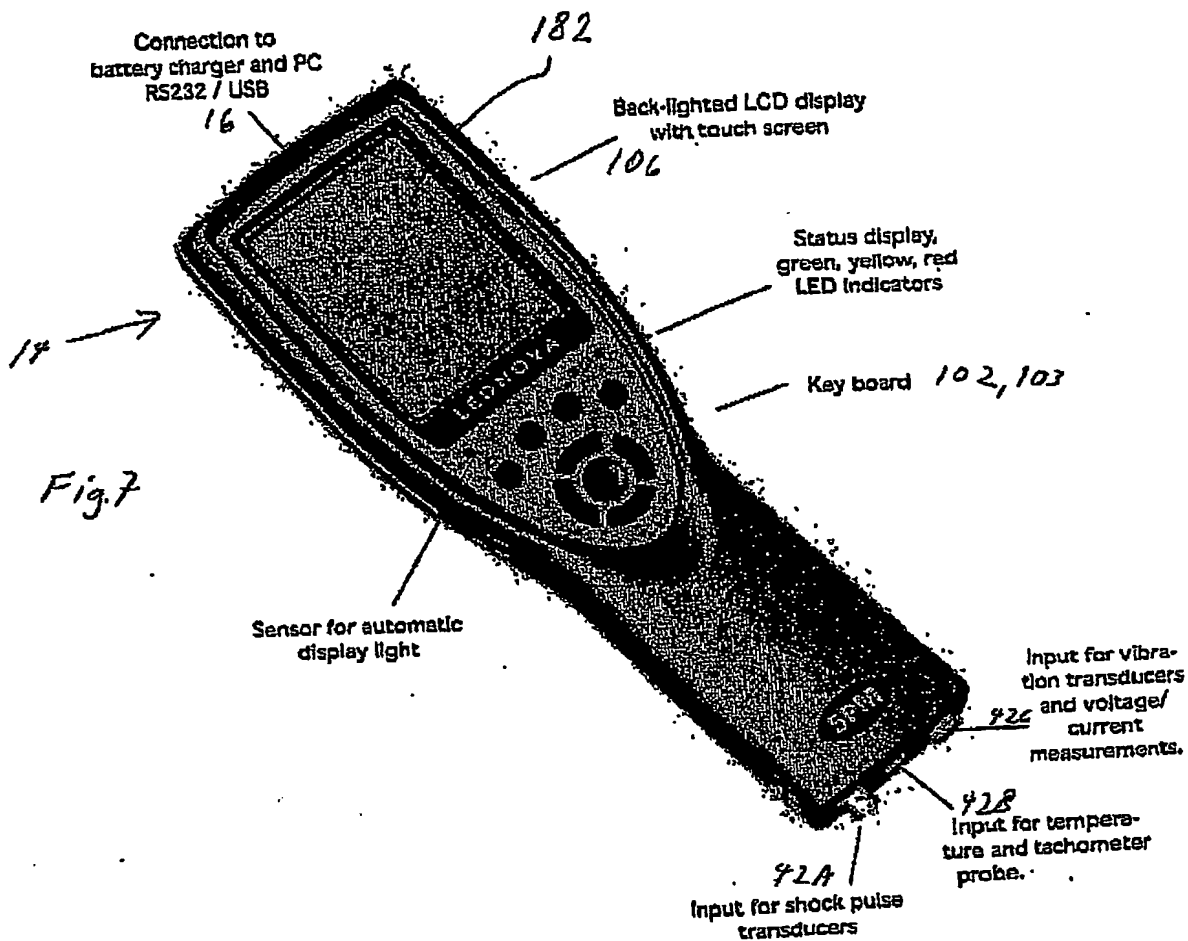


Fig. 6

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Fig 9

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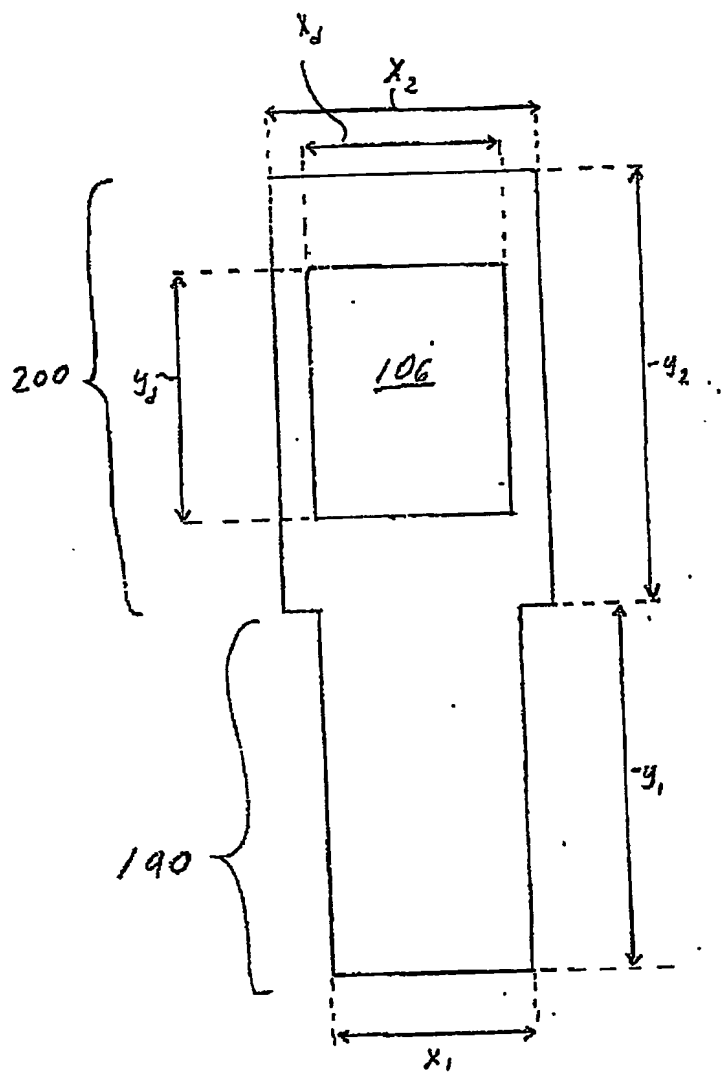


Fig 10

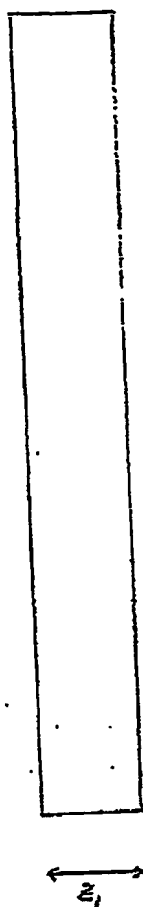


Fig 11

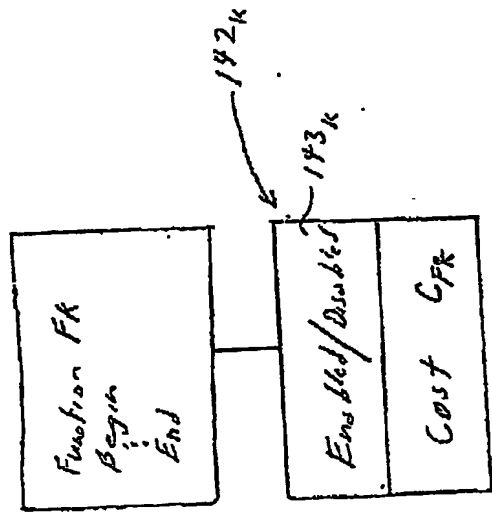


FIG 13A

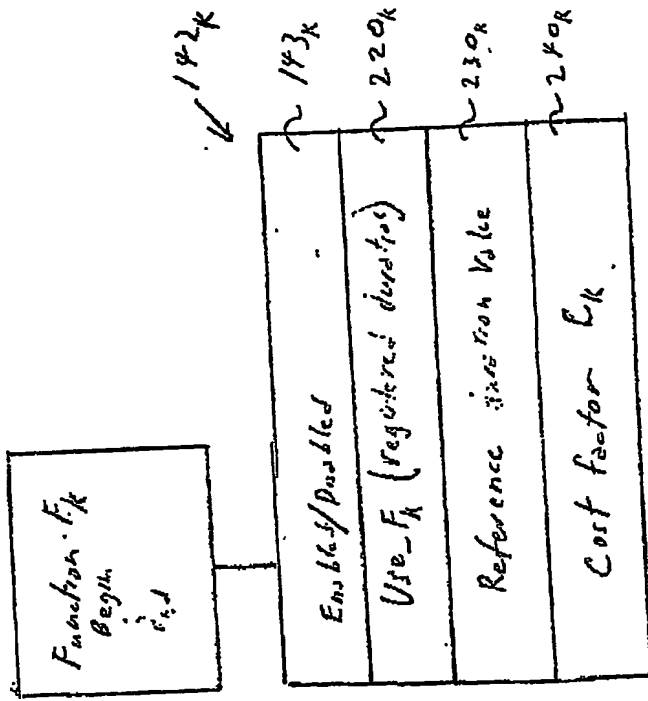


FIG 13B

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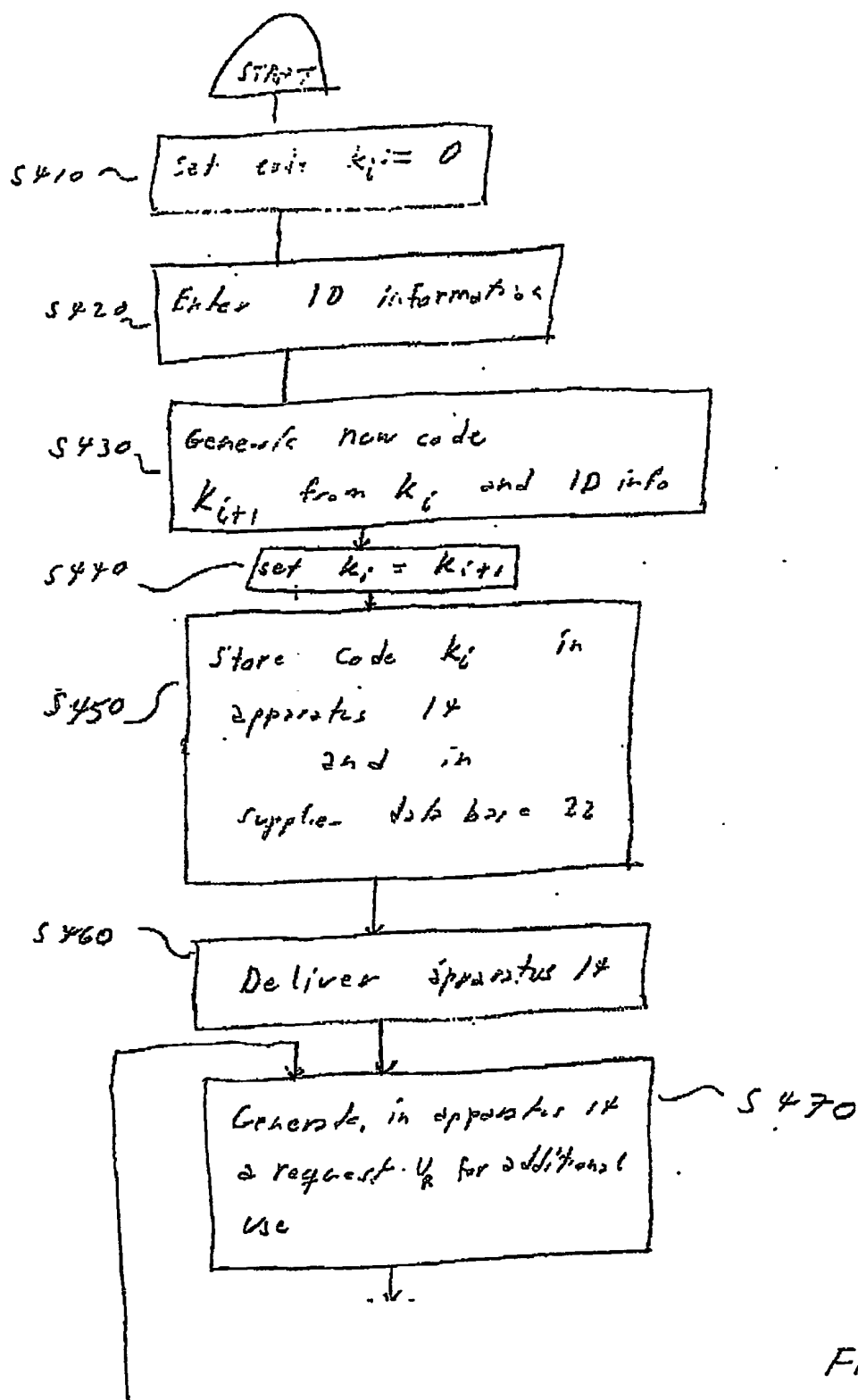


FIG 14A

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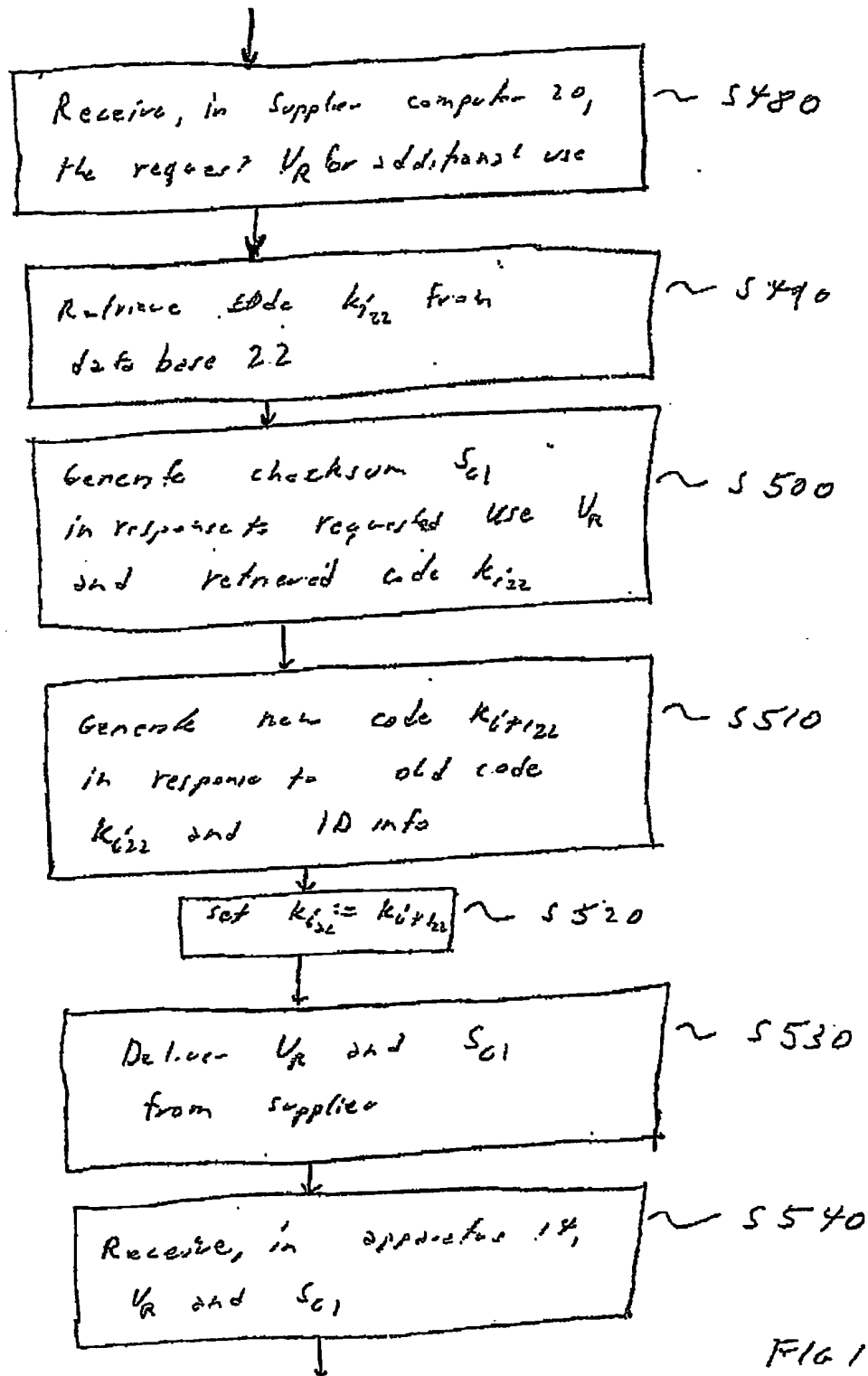


FIG 14E

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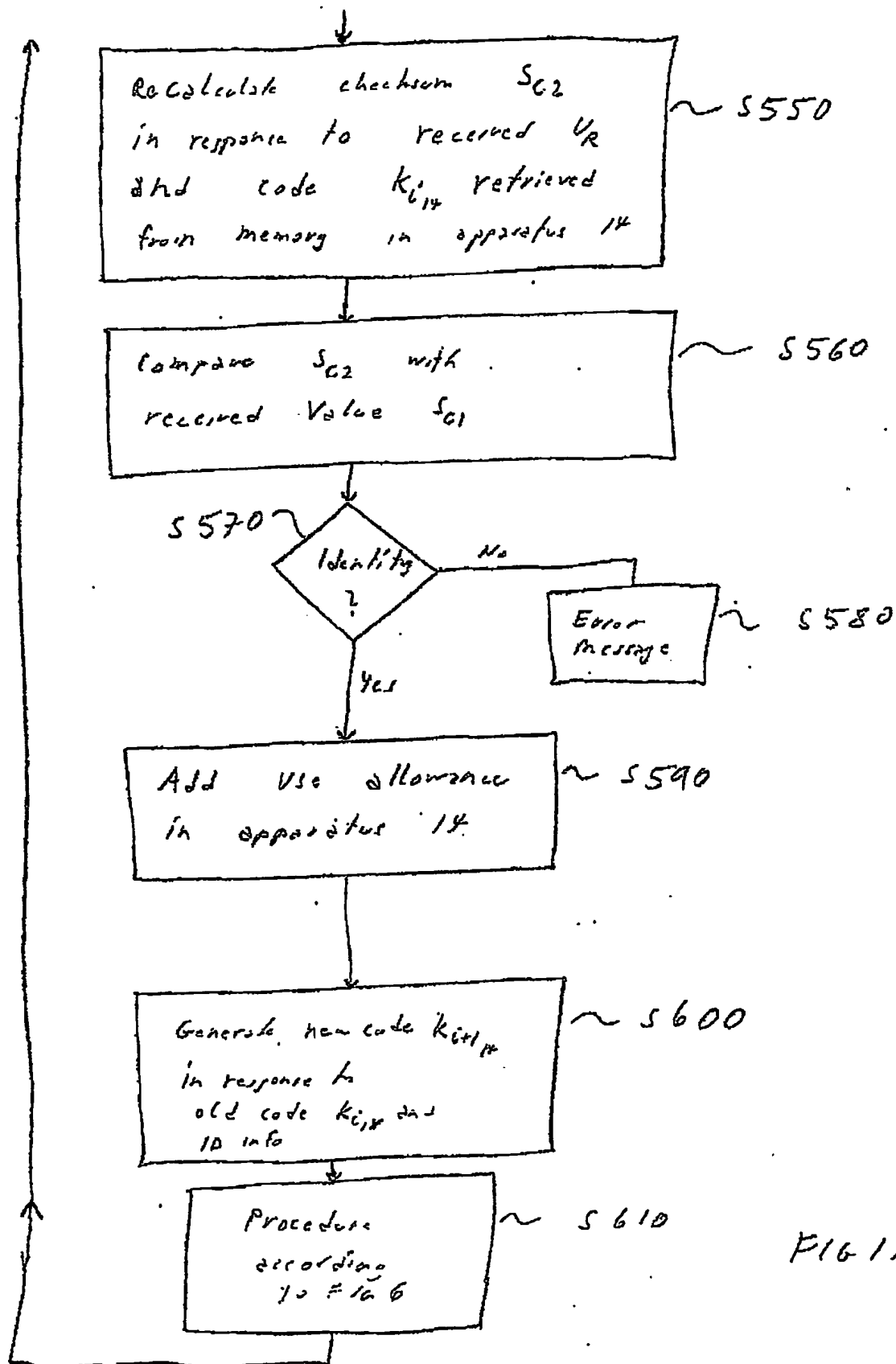


FIG 14C

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